Elephantulus myurus – Eastern Rock Sengi

Regional Red List status (2016)	**Least Concern**
National Red List status (2004)	Least Concern
Reasons for change	No change
Global Red List status (2015)	Least Concern
TOPS listing (NEMBA)	None
CITES listing	None
Endemic	No

This species is named from its close association with rocky habitat (Skinner & Chimimba 2005).

Taxonomy

Elephantulus myurus (Thomas & Schwann 1906)

ANIMALIA - CHORDATA - MAMMALIA - MACROSCELIDEA - MACROSCELIDIDAE - *Elephantulus* - *myurus*

Common names: Eastern Rock Sengi, Eastern Elephant-shrew (English), Klip Klaasneus (Afrikaans)

Taxonomic status: Species

Taxonomic notes: In the past the single family was included in the order Insectivora, but now the family is in the monophyletic order Macroscelidea and the newly created super-cohort Afrotheria. Currently, there are 19 living species recognized in four genera. The soft-furred sengis or elephant-shrews include three genera: *Petrodromus* is monospecific, *Macroscelides* has three species, and *Elephantulus* contains 11 species. The four species of giant sengis belong to the genus *Rhynchocyon*. The common name "sengi" is being used in place of elephant-shrew by many biologists to try and disassociate the Macroscelidea from the true shrews (family Soricidae) in the order Soricomorpha. See the IUCN SSC Afrotheria Specialist Group web site and www.sengis.org for additional information.

Assessment Rationale

This species occupies habitats that are dominated by large rocks and boulders that are not particularly suitable for any intense human activities with the possible exception of grazing, especially by goats. There is no indication that this species or the habitats it uses face any major threats, and there has been no documented range contraction in the assessment region. Therefore, the species remains Least Concern.

Regional population effects: Continuous distribution with rest of African range.

Distribution

Recorded from the eastern areas of South Africa north into Zimbabwe and eastern Botswana and western Mozambique (Corbet & Hanks 1968; Skinner & Chimimba 2005). Within the assessment region, it occurs across the central to northern parts of the country in all provinces except the Western Cape. The Eastern Rock Sengi is absent from Lesotho. In South Africa, it is widely distributed in Limpopo, Gauteng, Free State and Mpumalanga (Skinner & Chimimba 2005). In the Free State Province, it was regularly seen in rocky outcrops in Tussen-die-Riviere Nature Reserve (Watson 2006). In the North West Province, it was captured in rocky habitats in the eastern parts of the province, and was abundant in the Magaliesberg (Power 2014). This species also occurs in the eastern regions of the Northern Cape and in areas of the Eastern Cape (Skinner & Chimimba 2005). It is also present in the mountainous areas of north-western KwaZulu-Natal.

Population

This species is locally common throughout its range in the assessment region and can be the most abundant of all *Elephantulus* species in South Africa. The population fluctuates naturally, due to climatic factors (rainfall).

Current population trend: Stable

Continuing decline in mature individuals: No

Number of mature individuals in population: Unknown

Number of mature individuals in largest subpopulation: Unknown

Number of subpopulations: Unknown

Severely fragmented: No

Habitats and Ecology

As its name suggests, this species prefers habitat with rocky outcrops or koppies (hills) that provide sufficient cracks and holes for shelter and nesting sites (Corbet & Hanks 1968; Rathbun 2005). For example, at Rolfontein Nature Reserve, Northern Cape Province, only one of 34 specimens was caught in an open vegetation community, and this was also on a trap-line that passed near a small

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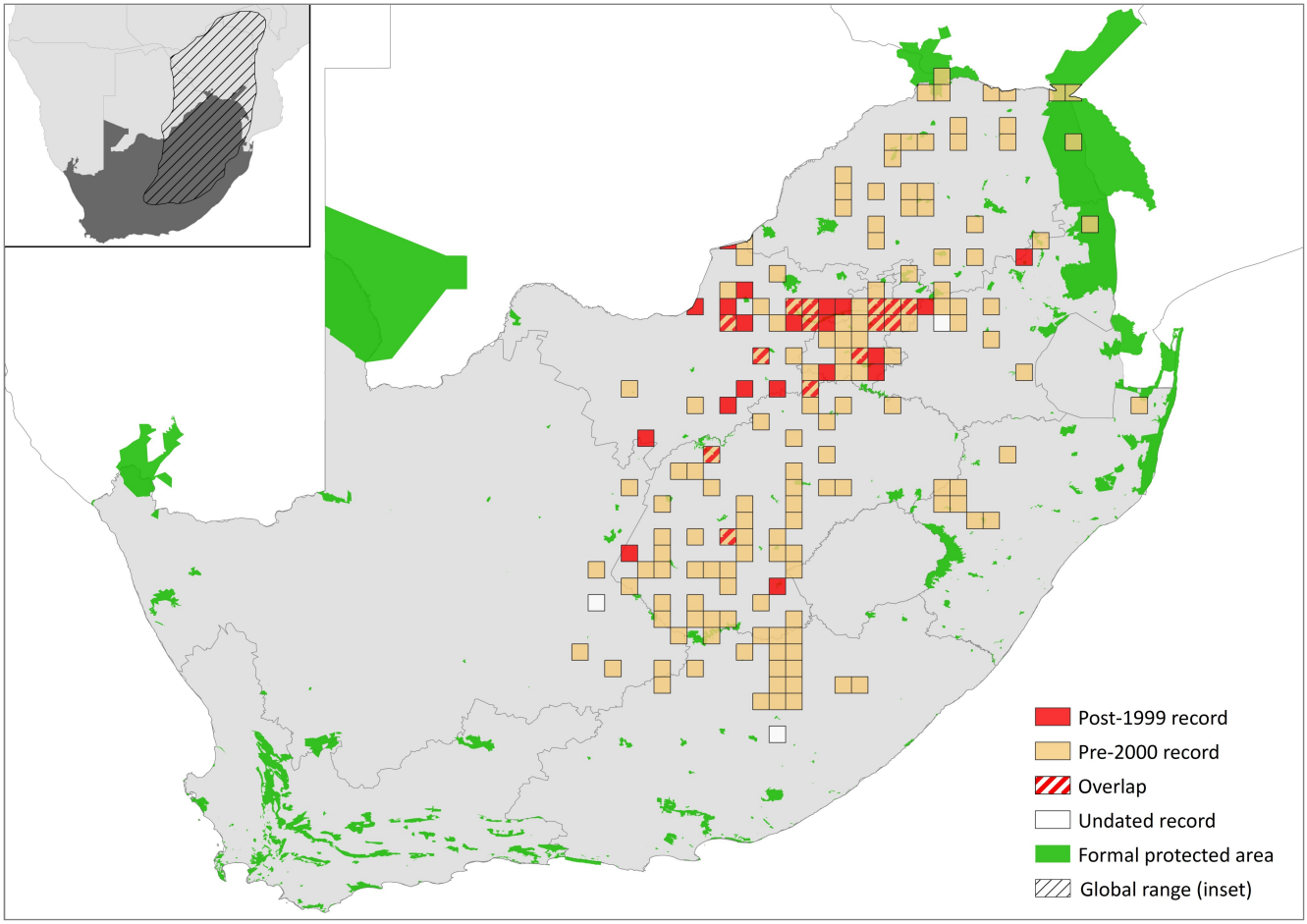

Figure 1. Distribution records for Eastern Rock Sengi (*Elephantulus myurus*) within the assessment region

Table 1. Countries of occurrence within southern Africa

Country	Presence	Origin
Botswana	Extant	Native
Lesotho	Absent	-
Mozambique	Extant	Native
Namibia	Absent	-
South Africa	Extant	Native
Swaziland	Absent	-
Zimbabwe	Extant	Native

pile of rocks (Jooste & Palmer 1982). The species has a preference for parts of rocky habitats which have over-hanging ledges or vegetation which provides cover from aerial predators (Skinner & Chimimba 2005). Key vegetation types for this species include the Nama Karoo, Grassland and Savanna Biomes.

Ecosystem and cultural services: Sengi species are thought to be included in San art and are therefore subject to local folklore.

Use and Trade

There is no evidence that this species is used for local or international trade.

Threats

There are no major threats to the species. However, overgrazing from livestock and wildlife ranching may cause local declines through the loss of ground cover.

Table 2. Threats to the Eastern Rock Sengi (*Elephantulus myurus*) ranked in order of severity with corresponding evidence (based on IUCN threat categories, with regional context)

Rank	Threat description	Evidence in the scientific literature	Data quality	Scale of study	Current trend
1	*3.2 Mining & Quarrying*: loss of habitat from increased mining activity.	-	Anecdotal	-	Increasing
2	*2.3.2 Small-holder Grazing, Ranching or Farming*. Current stress *1.2 Ecosystem Degradation*: overgrazing leading to loss of ground cover.	-	Anecdotal	-	Unknown
3	*1.1 Housing & Urban Areas*. Current stress *1.1 Ecosystem conversion*.	-	Anecdotal	Regional	Increasing

Table 3. Conservation interventions for the Eastern Rock Sengi (*Elephantulus myurus*) ranked in order of effectiveness with corresponding evidence (based on IUCN action categories, with regional context)

Rank	Intervention description	Evidence in the scientific literature	Data quality	Scale of evidence	Demonstrated impact	Current conservation projects
1	*2.3 Habitat & Natural Process Restoration*: mining rehabilitation and conservancy formation.	-	Anecdotal	-	-	-
2	*1.1 Site/Area Management*: maintain stocking rates at ecological levels.	-	Anecdotal	-	-	-

Mining activities, especially coal mining, can contribute to habitat loss. The species occurs in the Grassland Biome, South Africa's least protected and most exploited biome through mineral extraction, agricultural crop farming and urban expansion.

Current habitat trend: Stable. This species occurs in rocky habitats that are unlikely to be extensively transformed.

Conservation

This species occurs in many protected areas across its range. Although no specific interventions are necessary at present, we suspect that destocking on agricultural and ranchlands would benefit the species. Key protected areas for the species include Mapungubwe National Park, Kruger National Park and Golden Gate National Park.

Recommendations for land managers and practitioners:

- Expansion of the protected area network.
- Land managers should stock cattle or game at ecological levels.

Research priorities:

- Determine density estimates and range sizes across the species' distribution in South Africa.

Encouraged citizen actions:

- Citizens are encouraged to report sightings on virtual museum platforms (for example, iSpot and MammalMAP) with photographic confirmation.

Data Sources and Quality

Table 4. Information and interpretation qualifiers for the Eastern Rock Sengi (*Elephantulus myurus*) assessment

Data sources	Field study (unpublished), indirect information (expert knowledge), museum records
Data quality (max)	Inferred
Data quality (min)	Suspected
Uncertainty resolution	Expert consensus
Risk tolerance	Evidentiary

References

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Details of the methods used to make this assessment can be found in *Mammal Red List 2016: Introduction and Methodology.*